



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520



September 5, 1978

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

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Knowing of your interest both in human rights and in UNESCO, I thought you would appreciate being informed of two important UNESCO developments in the human rights area. The first took place at a UNESCO meeting of governmental experts held in Paris, March 13-20, to draft a Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice for submission to the UNESCO General Conference next fall. The second concerns the adoption by the UNESCO Executive Board, April 24-June 9, of a set of new and stronger procedures for processing complaints of human rights violations.

Draft Declaration

The draft Declaration was adopted by a consensus of nearly 100 Member States and, when approved by the UNESCO General Conference, which meets in Paris this fall, will speak with authority for the international community even though it creates no legal obligations. It constitutes a significant and comprehensive statement on race and racial prejudice which the United States can endorse, although we found it necessary to express certain reservations. A copy of the text, consisting of a Preamble and ten Articles, and a list of the members of the U.S. Delegation to the March meeting are enclosed.

A very positive and promising achievement of the Conference was the avoidance of any direct or indirect mention in the draft Declaration of the noxious UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 declaring Zionism to be a form of racism. Since its passage in 1975, the resolution has not been endorsed by UNESCO or reaffirmed by any organ of

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the UN. However, there had always been one or another of the various standard formulas for making indirect reference to it. The meeting represented a form of breakthrough because an Arab resolution employing one of these formulas was not accepted.

It should be noted that Israel, which also participated in the meeting and joined in the consensus, subsequently decided to resume payment of its assessed contribution to UNESCO. No payment had been made by Israel since the adoption by the 1974 General Conference of certain resolutions aimed against Israel.

Regarding specific language of the draft Declaration, the first Article proclaims that "All human beings...are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity." The Article also asserts the "right to be different" while insisting that differences in life styles cannot justify discriminatory practices. Differences between the achievements of peoples are "entirely attributable to geographical, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors."

Article II of the draft text proclaims that "racial prejudice, historically linked with inequalities, is totally without justification." Article III speaks of the "right of peoples to self-determination" while Article IV decries "any restriction on the complete self-fulfillment of human beings" and condemns genocide as "a crime against humanity." Repeated references to the evil of genocide appear elsewhere in the draft document, as well. Article IX emphasizes that human rights "is a generally accepted and recognized principle of international law" and "consequently any form of racial discrimination practiced by states constitutes a violation of international law giving rise to international responsibility."

#### Human Rights Procedures

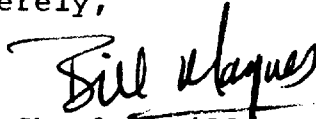
While the Declaration on Race requires the approval of the General Conference this fall, the new human rights procedures adopted by consensus by the spring session of the Executive Board, which ended June 9, can be implemented immediately.

The new rules make it possible for UNESCO to examine individual cases as well as questions of "massive, systematic or flagrant" violations of human rights which may result either from a policy contrary to human rights applied by a state or from an accumulation of individual cases. Complaints must concern UNESCO's fields of competence, i.e. education, social and natural sciences, culture and communication. A major provision enables communications to be presented by "any person, group of persons or non-governmental organization having reliable knowledge of the alleged violations of human rights."

In several respects, the new procedures put UNESCO out in front of the United Nations system in the human rights area. The stress on individual rights is particularly welcome.

I believe these developments represent significant and encouraging steps forward and am confident that they will be of interest to you.

Sincerely,



Charles William Maynes  
Assistant Secretary of State  
International Organization Affairs

Enclosures:

1. Copy of Declaration.
2. List of Members of U.S. Delegation to  
Race and Racial Prejudice Meeting.